

Issue 2, February 2019



THE WARITH MAGAZINE

The Official Magazine of the Holy Shrine of Imam Hussain (as)





صلى الله عليه وسلم

الله

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نَسَاءُ الْمَسْكِينِ

الله

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



EDITORIAL

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

By the grace of God, we humbly present to the Imam of our time (af), the second issue of The Warith Magazine, dedicated to Lady Fatimah (as).

Words cannot sufficiently describe the love of Lady Fatimah's (as) followers towards her, let alone capture her honourable status in the eyes of God. She was the locus of Prophethood and Imamate and acknowledging the oppression inflicted upon her as a travesty of her noble position is considered by many scholars to be an integral aspect of faith within the school of Ahl al-Bayt (as).

In this issue, our contributors have exerted their humble efforts to elucidate some aspects of her beautiful life and shed light on Lady Fatimah's (as) illustrious personality based on extant historical reports and traditions. This issue contains articles discussing lessons in child-upbringing drawn from Lady Fatimah's (as) exemplary life and the relevance of her example and teaching in modern times. It also provides both a full translation of Lady Fatimah's (as) sermon of Fadak, as well as an investigation of the historical sources from which the sermon is derived. It includes poetry inspired by her tragedy and questions and answers on important aspects of her life and personality.

Many hands have worked together to bring this issue to fruition. I would like to thank our content contributors, editors, artists, designers, The Batool Foundation, for their contributions.

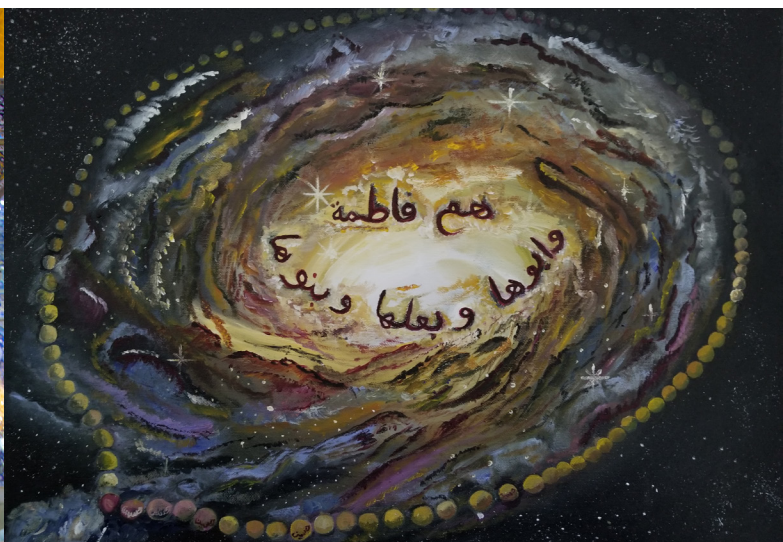
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Editor of The Warith Magazine



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



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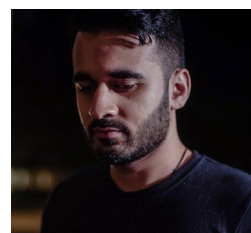
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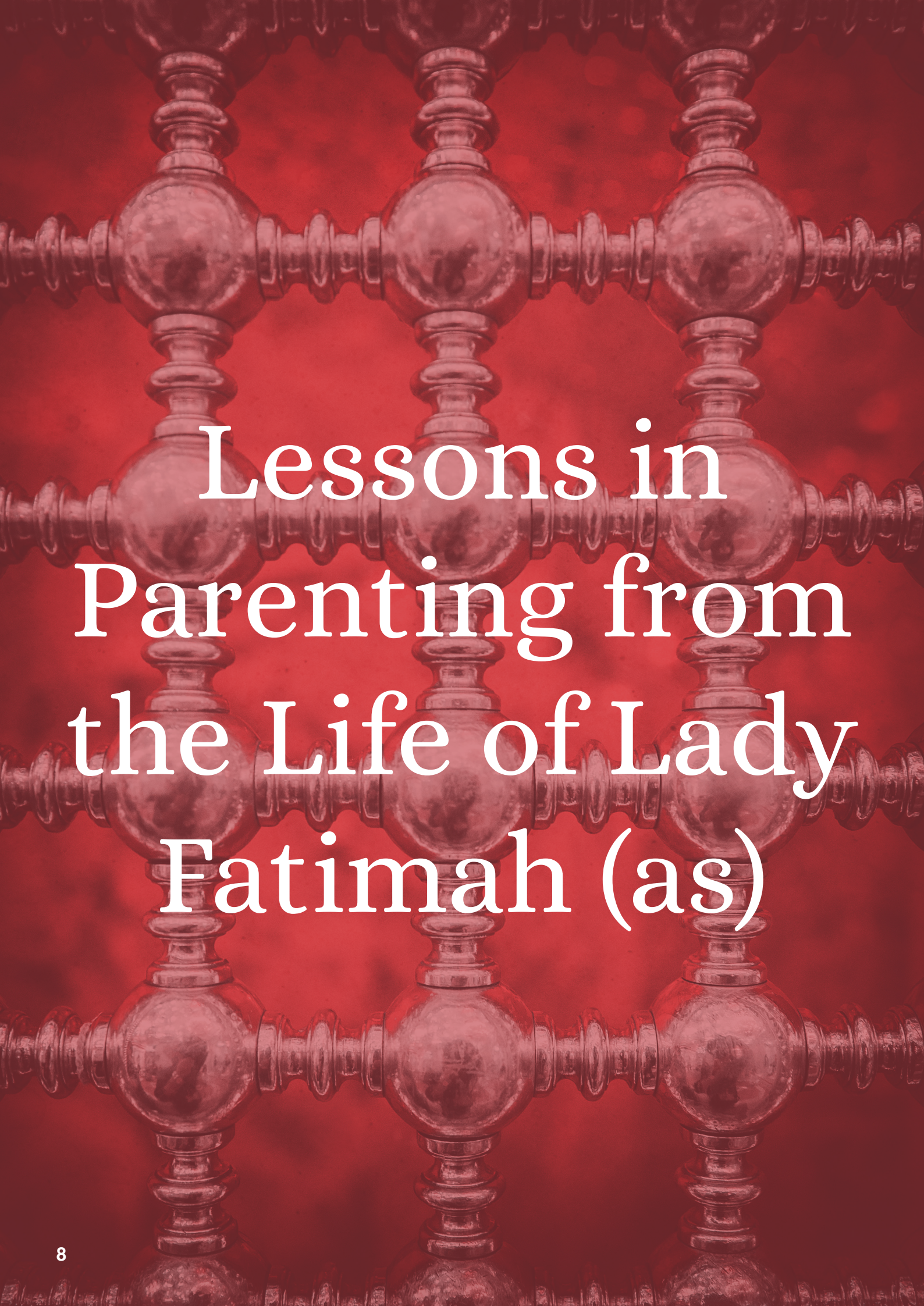
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Lessons in Parenting from the Life of Lady Fatimah (as)

God has fashioned us in such a way that from the moment we open our eyes in this world, we begin a lifetime of learning and education. Certainly, all of us come into this world with very limited awareness and as we mature, our knowledge and understanding increases. The first and most important mode of education for children is the learning facilitated by parents. In this 'school', the building blocks of a child's faith, world view, and overall awareness, are formulated. Therefore, the role of parents in shaping good, productive and impactful human beings, cannot be underestimated. Indubitably, both the mother and father play a significant and important role in the upbringing of their children; however, Islam has distinguished the mother with a uniquely honourable station in this regard.

In a famous narration of the Holy Prophet (saw), he mentions that heaven lies beneath the feet of mothers. In another narration, a man comes to the Holy Prophet (saw) and asks repeatedly whom he should honour and respect in order to reap the greatest reward. He asks the Holy Prophet (saw) the same question three times, and each time, the Holy Prophet (saw) instructs him to honour his mother. It is only when the question is asked a fourth time, that the Holy Prophet (saw) refers to his father, thus clearly delineating a special honour and merit exclusively for mothers. Moreover, Imam Zayn al-Abidin (as) states in his Risalat al-Huquq that "...you should know that you are unable to thank your mother appropriately unless God helps you..." History reveals that the role of a virtuous and pure mother in nurturing pious offspring is so uniquely profound that in the absence of a righteous and pious mother, even the children of prophets may be led astray.



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To truly appreciate the honour that God has granted women in their role as mothers, one need not look further than the sacred personality of Lady Fatimah al-Zahra (as). When we analyse her blessed role as the mother of the Imams, it becomes clear that Lady Fatimah (as) manifested all the qualities of an excellent mother in the most perfect and immaculate way. Indeed, she herself was the child of the final Messenger of Allah (saw), from whose example we can derive wisdom such as the importance of consuming pure food prior to conceiving a child. It is narrated that when the Holy Prophet (saw) ascended to the heavens (mi'raaj), he ate from the pure fruit of the heavenly tree, Tooba, the consumption of which led to the conception of Lady Fatimah (as).

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Lady Fatimah (as) manifested all the qualities of an excellent mother in the most perfect and immaculate way.

During her childhood, Lady Fatimah (as) developed her caring and nurturing personality by tending to her father during the tumultuous and difficult early years of the prophetic mission. Imam al-Sadiq (as) states: "Surely Fatimah [as] was given the epithet: 'the mother of her father.'" According to Shia scholars, this epithet denotes two unique distinctions: Lady Fatimah (as) supported and cared for the Holy Prophet (saw) at a time when his entire community opposed him and the Holy Prophet (saw) revered and respected Lady Fatimah (as) by meriting her the lofty station of his mother. Therefore, even before becoming a mother, Lady Fatimah (as) already encapsulated the requisite character and skills of a devoted mother.

During her short life, Lady Fatimah (as) was blessed with four children, all of whom she raised in the best manner. Her role as the mother of two infallible Imams is unprecedented; no other woman before or after her, has been blessed with a responsibility of such honour and magnitude. Together with Imam Ali (as), she raised the leaders of the youth of paradise in such a lofty manner that both Imam Hasan (as) and Imam Hussain (as) changed the course of Islamic history by saving the fledgling religion of Islam at two critical junctures. Imam Hasan's (as) prudent recourse to a peace-treaty in order to protect the well-being and stability of the Islamic community and Imam Hussain's (as) courageous stand in the face of tyranny, reflected the success of the noble upbringing of their mother, Lady Fatimah (as).

Furthermore, all members of the holy household of Prophet Muhammad (saw) epitomised the highest degree of justice and fairness. All facets of their existence were directed by an unflinching commitment to justice, including the manner in which they nurtured and raised their children. In a society that despised women, the Holy Prophet (saw) raised and loved Lady Fatimah (as) as devotedly as he would have loved and raised a son. The verses of Surat al-Kawthar reinforce the position of Lady Fatimah (as) in enhancing the dignity and eminence of the Holy Messenger (saw).

In fact, the Holy Prophet (saw) referred to Lady Fatimah (as) as a 'piece' of him because she exemplified all his attributes in her being. The Holy Prophet's (saw) commitment to justice, in loving and raising all his children with the greatest devotion, regardless of gender, was then also embodied by his beloved daughter, Lady Fatimah (as), when she raised her own children.

Like their brothers, Lady Zaynab (as) and Umm Kulthum (as) were also raised by Lady Fatimah (as) to become the most noble, virtuous and pious people of their time. With courage and wisdom, they played a critical role in protecting Islam from degradation and ruin. They were the most brave and learned women in their societies, establishing and consolidating the success of Imam Hussain's (as) mission by actively disseminating the truth and value of his stand amongst the people. Lady Zaynab's (as) eloquence and staunchness in the face of despotism and hostility reflected the example and nurturing of both her parents. Whilst much attention has been focused on the numerous powerful sermons given by Imam Ali (as) that reveal his unparalleled knowledge and wisdom, Lady Fatimah's (as) remarkable Sermon of Fadak is sometimes overlooked. This sermon provides deep insight into Lady Fatimah's (as) incomparable wisdom, eloquence and confidence when challenging unjust leadership. In fact, the unique and integral role played by each of Lady Fatimah's (as) children in upholding divine principles of truth and justice, is a tribute to her exceptional upbringing and example.

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Surely Fatimah [as] was given the epithet: 'the mother of her father.'

Since the early days of her marriage to Imam Ali (as), Lady Fatimah (as) lived in perfect alignment with the prophetic tradition that "... the woman is the nurturer of the family, her husband, and children and she is responsible towards them." At the outset of her marriage to Imam Ali (as), the Holy Prophet (saw) divided familial responsibilities justly between Imam Ali (as) and Lady Fatimah (as), thus establishing the framework for an ideal Islamic marriage. Imam al-Baqir (as) mentions that "Fatimah [as] vouched to take care of the household work, make dough, bake bread, and clean the house; in return, Ali [as] vouched to take care of the outside work [such as] gathering firewood, and bringing food." Lady Fatimah (as) ensured that she always fulfilled these responsibilities in the best manner, thus actualising her role as the nurturer of the family.



By Allah [swt], I never angered Fatimah [as], or forced her to do something [she did not like], up to the day she died; nor did she ever anger or disobey me. In fact, when I looked at her, depression and sadness would be removed from my [heart].

Imam Ali (as) and Lady Fatimah (as) worked together to form a strong relationship that was built on love, respect and cooperation. Imam Ali (as) states: "By Allah [swt], I never angered Fatimah [as], or forced her to do something [she did not like], up to the day she died; nor did she ever anger or disobey me. In fact, when I looked at her, depression and sadness would be removed from my [heart]." Lady Fatimah (as) instilled this same love, respect and cooperation in her children. Moreover, after the death of the Holy Prophet (saw), she was courageous and proactive in asserting her husband's divine rights and position. In taking her children with her as she went door to door asking people whether they had forgotten their pledge of allegiance at Ghadir Khum, Lady Fatimah (as) impressed upon her children the critical importance of standing up for truth and justice.

When we look at the lives of Lady Fatimah's (as) children, the deep bonds of love, understanding, and cooperation between them shine through in innumerable ways. For example, during the Imamate of Imam Hasan (as), Imam Hussain (as) wholeheartedly stood by his brother's side, never waning in his support. Respecting his elder brother's position as the Imam of the time, Imam Hussain (as) embraced a loyal and supportive role. A quick scan of historical sources reveals that during this phase of his life, Imam Hussain (as) held back from narrating ahadith, deferring instead to his brother's position as the Imam of the time and the focal point of reference for knowledge and prophetic traditions. In fact, Imam al-Baqir (as) states that: "Imam Hussain, out of respect, would not speak when in the presence of Imam Hasan." As amply evidenced in historical sources, whilst Imam Hasan (as) faced widespread treachery within the Muslim ummah, Imam Hussain (as) exemplified complete loyalty and devotion to his brother. Lady Zaynab (as) and Umm Kulthum (as) also supported both their brothers, notably in Karbala through the events of Ashura and in the difficult years in Damascus and Madina thereafter. It was their unwavering commitment to the divine truth, nurtured by the teaching and example of their mother, that ensured the success of Imam Hussain's (as) mission in preserving the authenticity of the prophetic message and reforming the ummah.

According to Islamic traditions, one of the most important methods of raising positive and happy children is to provide them with an environment of love, security and joy. The Holy Prophet (saw) states in a hadith: "Love children and be kind to them." He also instructs: "Anyone with whom there is a child, shall treat him as a child." There are numerous examples in hadith literature reflecting how the Holy Prophet (saw) lovingly interacted with children and played with them. As mentioned earlier, Lady Fatimah (as) was both a biological and spiritual extension of her father and thus serves as the best example of a loving mother who interacted with her children in the most caring and beautiful way. The famous Hadith al-Kisa reflects her loving and attentive interaction with her sons, when she refers to them both as "...the light of my eyes and delight of my heart".

An important point to note here is that Lady Fatimah (as) did not differentiate between the brothers in her terms of endearment and addressed both of them in the same manner. A lesson that can be extracted from this is that a mother should equally love all her children and this love should be expressed to each child, without partiality and discrimination.

Tenderness and affection marked Lady Fatimah's (as) daily interaction with her children and where suitable, she combined love and gentleness with playful engagement to impart and nurture spiritual values and teachings. For example, once whilst Lady Fatimah (as) played with Imam Hasan (as) and cradled him in her arms, she recited the following poem: "My son Hasan, be like your father: pluck out the rope of falsehood to free the truth, worship God whose bounties are endless, do not befriend the unjust ones." Through this poem, Lady Fatimah (as) emphasised to her young son, the importance of worshipping God, remembering His bounties, standing up for truth and justice, and distancing oneself from the perpetrators of oppression and injustice. She encouraged Imam Hasan (as) to be like his father who was the epitome of justice and the purest of monotheists, renowned for his unparalleled worship. Hence, by creatively and meaningfully facilitating learning through play and encouraging her children to follow exceptional role models, Lady Fatimah (as) showed us how best to nurture happy and confident children, firm in their conviction and application of lofty values and ideals.

Lady Fatimah's (as) father, the Holy Prophet (saw), always taught by example and she too followed in his footsteps when she was blessed with her own children. Through his actions and speech, the Holy Messenger (saw) modelled the honesty, generosity, bravery, compassion and other virtues he encouraged all believers to espouse. Lady Fatimah (as) recognised that the family unit is the foundation of a society and thus implemented a similar method in teaching her children. When parents lead by example in living virtuous and ethical lives, they are more able to nurture children who will strive to imbibe these values within themselves and their communities.

For example, Lady Fatimah (as) nurtured the values of generosity and detachment from material possessions, by always attending to the needs of any needy person who knocked upon her door. Her selflessness and compassion for the deprived is beautifully reflected in Surat al-Insan wherein is narrated the story of how at the end of each of three consecutive days of fasting, she gave away her family's entire meal of daily bread - to a poor person on the first night, followed by an orphan on the second night, and finally, to a captive on the third night.

Lady Fatimah (as) was also munificent and selfless in supplication, teaching her children by example, to always pray for others before praying for themselves. History is also replete with examples of how her life reflected contentment, complete reliance on Allah (swt) and devotion to worship. In modelling an immaculately virtuous and pious life, she raised her children to also be the best individuals and noblest leaders within their communities. The generosity and asceticism of Imam Hasan (as), for example, was unmatched in his time, earning him the title, the 'generous one of the Ahl al-Bayt [as]'. Similarly, Imam Hussain's (as) complete submission to God's will and contentment with His decree, throughout the immense suffering of Ashura, finds no ethical or spiritual parallel in history. Like her brother, Lady Zainab (as) also reflected Lady Fatimah's noble example and upbringing by seeking solace and support only in Allah (swt) through the tragedies of Karbala. Even through the calamities of war and the imprisonment that followed, she consistently sought His love and proximity through the regular performance of Salat al-Layl.

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Tenderness and affection marked Lady Fatimah's (as) daily interaction with her children and where suitable, she combined love and gentleness with playful engagement to impart and nurture spiritual values and teachings.

In today's rapidly changing world, the challenges faced by our children are innumerable and evolving. Therefore, providing children with a strong ethical and spiritual foundation from a very early age, is of paramount importance. Success in this endeavour can be best achieved by mothers who seek, in the life and teachings of Lady Fatimah (as), the perfect model of exceptional parenting. In nurturing the immaculate characters and leadership of Imam Hasan (as), Imam Hussain (as), Lady Zaynab (as) and Umm Kulthum (as), Lady Fatimah (as) manifested the central role of a pure and virtuous mother in raising noble and righteous children. Indeed, it was Lady Fatimah's (as) upbringing and education that enabled Imam Hussain (as) to develop the strength of character and spirit required to carry out the greatest spiritual revolution and sacrifice that history has ever witnessed.

There is no better time for Muslim parents to wholeheartedly apply the teachings of Lady Fatimah (as) so that our children also rise to uphold truth and justice and challenge the countless oppressive forces that are driving the world towards chaos. Lady Fatimah (as) is our guide to raising true and committed followers of Imam Hussain (as), for Imam Hussain (as) in one source has been reported to have said: "I am indebted for my courage, freedom, pursuit of liberty, and my dignity to the purity and chastity of my mother Fatimah [as]." (Mirath al-ahzan, Jafar b. Muhammad b. Nama al-Hilli)



Lady Fatimah (as) manifested the central role of a pure and virtuous mother in raising noble and righteous children.



*The Relevance of
Emulating Lady Fatimah
(as) in the 21st Century*



Lady Fatimah (as) has a uniquely elevated status in Islam. She was the beloved daughter of the Holy Prophet (saw), the wife of Imam Ali (as) and the mother of Imam Hasan (as) and Imam Hussain (as). Lady Fatimah (as) was the only woman granted the divinely ordained title, ‘Sayyidat Nisa al-‘Alamin’ (‘The Leader of all the Women of the Universe’). In ‘Hadith al-Kisa’ (‘the Narration of the Blanket’), she served as the pivot around which the Ahl al-Bayt (as) revolved. Moreover, Lady Fatimah (as) was so exalted in purity and piety that the angels spoke to her and the Holy Prophet (saw) stood up when she entered the room. Unable to sufficiently describe her in a way that captures the essence of her lofty station, scholars have simply concluded that ‘Fatimah (as) cannot be described as other than Fatimah (as)’.

As Muslims living centuries after her illustrious lifetime, we may feel that Lady Fatimah (as) is far beyond us in holiness and exceptional virtues. Whilst she is a role model for both men and women, how can we even begin to emulate Lady Fatimah’s (as) virtues when in relation to her loftiness, we are like particles of dust beneath her feet? In addition, the anecdotal information we have about her short life, is very limited. History is not replete with sayings, sermons, and events from her life because she lived a mere twenty years. Hence, we are only able to catch glimpses of her character through the few events history has recorded. We read about Lady Fatimah (as) being bereaved of her mother at a young age, consoling her beloved father when he was verbally or physically abused, fervently praying and fasting, giving away her wedding dress in charity, and offering all the food in her house to people who begged at her door. For the most part, and particularly after the Holy Prophet’s (saw) death, her short life seems to have been filled with toil and hardship. History reports that whilst she patiently endured an extensive amount of suffering, her daily life was generally spent doing the same things that other women did in her time: grinding, kneading, baking, cooking, taking care of children, and performing the role of female head of the household.

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As Muslims living centuries after her illustrious lifetime, we may feel that Lady Fatimah (as) is far beyond us in holiness and exceptional virtues.



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So how do we emulate Lady Fatimah (as) in the current era, an age in which giving away one's wedding dress or all the food in one's house after having fasted for three consecutive days, may not be pragmatic or feasible? How do we derive lessons in leadership, self-development, parenting, marriage and other important aspects of life? The most important thing to remember is that the best way to emulate Lady Fatimah (as) may not be by mechanically imitating her actions. Rather, it is better to first discover her personality and read carefully between the pages of history to determine the objectives behind her actions. One may also ask pertinent questions such as:

What were Lady Fatimah's (as) priorities in her daily life?

Where did her greatest pleasure and joy lie?

What motivated her and what were her goals?

What did Lady Fatimah (as) dislike?

What was Lady Fatimah's (as) greatest fear?

What motivated her to speak out in the public, political arena?

Although there are numerous ahadith and Quranic verses that denote Lady Fatimah's (as) sublime virtues and character, we will consider an incident that has been almost unanimously verified by widespread and extensive scholarly study. Various ahadith mention that after Lady Fatimah's (as) young sons, Imam Hasan (as) and Imam Hussain (as) suffered illness over a few days, the adults in the family vowed that they would fast for three days in a plea to Allah (swt) to cure their young sons. Imam Hasan (as) and Imam Hussain (as) insisted on fasting also and were granted permission to do so by Lady Fatimah (as). As the family gathered in the evening to open their first fast with bread baked by Lady Fatimah (as), a destitute pauper knocked on the door, begging for food. Lady Fatimah (as) and her family gave their entire meal to the beggar, satisfying their own hunger with merely salt and water. The following evening, an orphan came to their door seeking food and again, Lady Fatimah (as) and her family gave their meal away. Similarly, a freed captive of war sought food from the family on the evening of their third fast and Lady Fatimah (as) and her family, offered their iftar (fast-breaking meal) without hesitation. The Ahl al-Bayt's (as) compassion, selflessness, and sincerity as exemplified by this incident, is commended by Allah (swt) in the Holy Quran in Surat al-Insan (Chapter 76).

Lady Fatimah's (as) Priorities:

'They give food, out of love of Him, to the needy, the orphan and the prisoner.' (Quran 76:8)

Lady Fatimah (as) considered feeding others to be intrinsically linked to the spiritual nourishment of her own soul and she seized the opportunity to augment the virtue of fasting with that of generosity. Exegetes of the Holy Quran have also suggested an alternative translation to the phrase 'ala ḥubbihi' within the above verse, to mean 'despite love if it' (in reference to the food prepared for fast-breaking). This translation underscores Lady Fatimah's (as) priorities of encouraging acts of charity as a family and nurturing personal and familial spiritual growth through selflessness and virtue. Other narrations also attest to Lady Fatimah's (as) consistent prioritising of her children's spiritual nourishment above their physical comfort. For example, it is recorded that Lady Fatimah (as) kept her children awake on holy nights such as Laylat al-Qadr by sprinkling water on their faces so that they would not miss out on the blessings of worship and reflection through these nights.

Lady Fatimah's (as) Motivation:

'[saying] "We feed you only for the sake of Allah. We do not want any reward from you, nor any thanks."' (Quran 76:9)

According to the Quranic verse above, Lady Fatimah (as) and her family stated plainly and clearly that their sole motivation behind feeding the three needy people that knocked on their door, was to seek Allah's (swt) pleasure. They never sought appreciation or praise when performing an act of virtue; in fact, they did not even desire it.

Currently, we live in an age of self-promotion wherein self-worth and self-esteem are often and increasingly dependent on social media 'likes' and public approval. Moreover, even virtuous, charitable deeds are sometimes perceived as unworthy unless they gain public traction and go viral. Hence, the example of Lady Fatimah (as) and her family is very relevant and instructive in contemporary times. In all acts of charity and virtue, Lady Fatimah (as) sought the approval and pleasure of Allah (swt) alone.

Lady Fatimah's (as) Greatest Pleasure:

Lady Fatimah (as) experienced a range of human emotions, including happiness, sadness, pain and pleasure. Her nobility and purity lay in the fact that her feelings were always guided by a godly framework and hence, she never allowed her desires to transgress the bounds set by Allah (swt). She directed all her thoughts, emotions and actions towards the obedience and pleasure of Allah (swt), never deviating from this objective in the slightest measure. She also extended deep care and concern towards the people around her. Many examples from her life indicate that she selflessly fulfilled the needs of others, often preferring to attend to others before herself and her own family. Imam Hasan (as) narrates:

'I saw my mother Fatimah (as) standing up in her prayer niche on the eve of every Friday. She bowed and prostrated until dawn and I heard her praying for the believers, [mentioning them] by name and she prayed much for them but never for herself. Therefore, I said to her, "Mother, why do you not pray for yourself as you pray for others?" She replied, "My son, first the neighbour, then the household!"'

During the night, when spiritual horizons open and blessings descend upon those who bare their souls in worship of Allah (swt), Lady Fatimah (as) supplicated, not for herself, but for her neighbors and fellow believers. It was her greatest joy to worship and attain proximity to Allah (swt) by praying for His servants.

Lady Fatimah's (as) dislike:

One does not have to read too far into the biography and statements of Lady Fatimah (as) to discern her absolute aversion to injustice and unfairness. In fact, Lady Fatimah (as) actively resisted oppression. When the land of Fadak was usurped from her, she spoke out publicly to advocate her rights. She did not wait for her father's companions or even Imam Ali (as) to speak on her behalf. A careful study of her speeches reveals that her stance was not motivated by material desire. Rather, her speech focused on advising people towards correct belief and actions and the Quranic verses she quoted emphasized justice, fairness and inheritance rights. Within her speech, Lady Fatimah (as) also underscored the importance of sincerity;

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Lady Fatimah (as) actively resisted oppression. When the land of Fadak was usurped from her, she spoke out publicly to advocate her rights.

this was a subtle critique of the hypocrisy and duplicity rife within the ummah after the death of the Holy Prophet (saw). Both through her speeches and actions, Lady Fatimah (as) denounced the injustice and oppression directed towards Imam Ali (as) after the Holy Prophet's (saw) demise. In fact, Lady Fatimah (as) even continued her staunch protest in death, by requesting in her will that she be buried at night so that those who had violated her husband's rights and her own, would not have the privilege of attending her burial.

Lady Fatimah's (as) Greatest Fear:

'Indeed we fear from our Lord, a day frowning and fateful.' (Quran 76:10)

In the Quranic verse above, Allah (swt) describes the Day of Judgment as 'frowning', a term normally used to describe humans or sentient beings. In personifying the Day of Judgment in this way, Lady Fatimah (as) and her family describe the Day of Judgment almost as a living reality, rather than a distant, intangible notion. The term, 'frowning' connotes the Ahl al-Bayt's (as) greatest fear, referring to the disappointment of Allah (swt) rather than the punishment of the hell-fire. In the same measure that Lady Fatimah (as) sought the pleasure and approval of Allah (swt) as her paramount objective and deepest joy in life, she was equally wary and fearful of His disapproval and displeasure.

Immediately after Lady Fatimah (as) and her family voice their greatest fear in verse 10 of Surat al-Insan, Allah (swt) responds with the following reassurance:

“So Allah protected them from the ills of that Day, and granted them freshness and joy.” (Quran 76:11)

Thereafter, Allah (swt) lists in detail, the rewards in paradise that He will grant the Ahl al-Bayt (as), due to their steadfastness in seeking His proximity and pleasure alone:

“And He rewarded them for their patience with a garden, and [garments] of silk, reclining therein on couches. They will find therein neither scorching sun nor biting cold. Its shades will be close over them and its clusters [of fruits] will be hanging low. They will be served around with vessels of silver and goblets of crystal - crystals of silver - from which they dispense in a precise measure. They will be served with a cup of drink seasoned with zanjabil, a spring in it named Salsabil. They will be waited upon by immortal youths, whom when you see them, you will suppose them to be scattered pearls. As you look, you will see bliss and a great kingdom. Upon them will be cloaks of green silk and brocade, and they will be adorned with bracelets of silver...”

The extensive rewards promised to Lady Fatimah (as) and her family in the above verses serve as a prelude to the final and most worthy gift of all:

“Their Lord will give them a pure drink. [They will be told]: This is indeed your reward, and your endeavor has been well-appreciated.” (Quran 76:22)

Lady Fatimah (as) dedicated her entire life to seeking Allah’s (swt) pleasure and proximity and hence, it is no wonder then that being quenched by the Lord Himself is the reward for Lady Fatimah (as) and her family, that He Himself is pleased at what pleases her and upset at what upsets her, because for her, throughout her short life, His pleasure and His disappointment were a reality. She had made her motivation God’s pleasure and her fear His frowning and disappointment. The approval of her Lord on the Day of Judgement serves as a reward far greater than all the material pleasures and delights of paradise.

In conclusion, studying and taking lessons from the life of Lady Fatimah (as), does not indicate a reversion to an archaic past that is irrelevant to our times. Rather, the lessons that we glean from her life - of selfless sacrifice, commitment to justice, and above all, full and complete devotion to seeking the pleasure of Allah (swt) through every breath, word and action - are fresh, apt and integral to spiritual growth in all eras. In fact, Lady Fatimah’s (as) God-centric priorities, her singular motivation in serving Allah (swt), and her hopes and fears rooted in divine reality, serve as a vital compass in successfully navigating today’s secular, post-modern age.







The Sermon of Fadak



Fadak was a fertile farm of date-palms outside Medina. The Holy Prophet (saw) gifted it to his daughter Fatimah al-Zahra (as), but after he passed away, it was taken as the general property of Muslims. Fatimah al-Zahra (as) went to see the caliph and delivered a sermon in which she demanded what was rightfully hers. At that time, the mosque was full of the Muhajirin and Ansar. Fatimah entered with a group of women surrounding her. A special place was kept for her and she stood behind a curtain as she addressed Abu Bakr and all those who were present. When she had finished the first part of her sermon, Abu Bakr responded to what she had said. She then confuted his response using evidence from the Quran. This momentous sermon came to be known as the Sermon of Fadak. The Sermon of Fadak is one of the two famous sermons delivered by Lady Fatimah. Though this sermon is known as the Sermon of Fadak, it contains other discussions such as the philosophy of worship, the state of Arabs before Islam and the importance of the Quran. In this article we first examine the sources of this sermon and then proceed to translate the entire sermon.

Sources

It can be evinced from biographical accounts that this sermon was recorded in the earliest sources. Lut ibn Yahya, better known as Abu Mikhnaf al-Azdi (d. 154 A.H.), penned a monograph titled *Khutbat al-Zahra* which is no longer extant. The famous fourth century historian and hadith scholar Abu al-Faraj Isfahani, also wrote a book titled *Kalamu Fatimah fi Fadak* which, similarly, has not reached us. The teacher of al-Najashi and al-Tusi, Ahmad ibn Abd al-Wahid al-Bazzaz (d. 423 A.H.) is similarly said to have written a book called *Tafsir Khutbat Fatimah al-Zahra*.

Aside from these early works, we find that many scholars recorded this sermon in their books, either in its entirety or partially. It is interesting to see that many non-Shii sources have related this sermon. The oldest extant source of this sermon is Ibn Abi Tayfur's *Balaghat al-Nisa*. In addition to these sources, many other early works mention the existence of this sermon, albeit in passing. These include:



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- i. *Kitab al-Ayn* by al-Khalil ibn Ahmad al-Farahidi (d. 175 A.H.)
- ii. *Muruj al-Dhahab* by Ali ibn al-Hussain al-Masudi (d. 283 A.H.)
- iii. *Tahdhib al-Lughah* by Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Azhari (d. 370 A.H.)
- iv. *Al-Faiq fi Gharib al-Hadith* by Mahmud ibn Umar al-Zamakhshari (d. 538 A.H.)
- v. *Al-Nihayah fi Gharib al-Hadith wa-l-Athar* by Ibn Athir al-Jazari (d. 606 A.H.)

The following is a list of all the extant works, that were compiled before the end of the 7th century A.H., wherein the sermon of this holy lady has been mentioned:

1. Balaghat al-Nisa by Ahmad ibn Tayfur:

Abu al-Fadl Ahmad ibn Abi Tahir, better known as Ibn Tayfur (d. 280 A.H.), is reported to have authored about fifty works. His magnum opus was Tārikh Baghdad and another famous work by him is al-Manthur wal-Manzum. The latter work was penned in fourteen volumes out of which only the eleventh and twelfth volume have reached us. Part of the eleventh volume is currently available under the title: Balaghat al-Nisa. This monograph contains the speeches of some influential women. Ibn Tayfir narrates the sermon of Lady Fatimah after the speeches of Aishah, the wife of the Prophet (saw). This is one of the earliest written sources where the sermon of the Prophet's daughter has been recorded with its chain of transmission.

2. Mukhtasar Basair al-Darajat by Hasan ibn Sulayman al-Hilli:

Sa'd ibn Abdillah al-Ashari al-Qummi (d. 300 A.H.), one of the well-respected Shia scholars of his time, wrote a book called Basair al-Darajat (not to be confused with al-Saffar's Basair al-Darajat fi Fadail Al Muhammad). This book contained numerous traditions related to Shii beliefs and was extant until the eight century. Hasan ibn Sulayman al-Hilli, related some traditions from Basair al-Darajat, to which he then appended other traditions in a work known as Mukhtaṣar Basair al-Darajat. In this book, the author mentions the themes of the Sermon of Fadak without relating the actual sermon itself.

3. Al-Saqifah wa Fadak by Ahmad ibn Abd al-Aziz al-Jawhari:

Ahmad ibn Abd al-Aziz (d. 323 A.H.) was a fourth century Sunni hadith scholar. His work al-Saqifah wa Fadak, as the name suggests, recounts these two important historic events during the early period of Islam. This book is not extant. However, Ibn Abi al-Hadid has related some portions of it in his commentary on the Nahj al-Balagha. The book that is currently available under the title al-Saqifah wa Fadak is actually a compilation of what has been related by Ibn Abi al-Hadid. Al-Jawhari narrated parts of Lady Fatimah's sermon with its chains of transmission.

4. Maqatil al-Talibin by Abu al-Faraj Isfahani:

Abu al-Faraj Isfahani (d. 356 A.H.), authored many tomes, the most famous among which is the encyclopedic work al-Aghani. One of his other important works is Maqatil al-Talibin. In it he recounts the history of the progeny of Abd al-Muttalib. He mentions the existence of this sermon when he surveys the life of Zaynab al-Kubra (as) and notes that Ibn Abbas narrated Fatimah's (as) sermon from her saying: "Our aqilah, Zaynab bint Ali (as), narrated to me..."

5. Sharh al-Akhbar fi Faḍail al-Aimmat al-Athar by Nu'man ibn Muhammad:

Nu'man ibn Muhammad, better known as Qadi Nu'man al-Maghribi (d. 363 A.H.), was a Shii Ismaili scholar. He wrote this book with the aim of compiling the merits and virtues of the Ahl al-Bayt (as). In it he narrates part of the sermon of Lady Fatimah (as), without its chain of transmission, from Abdullah ibn Salam.

6. Man La Yahduruhu al-Faqih by Shaykh Saduq:

Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Babawayh al-Qummi, commonly known as Shaykh Saduq (d. 381 A.H.), was one of the luminaries of the Shia world. His work, Man La Yahduruhu al-Faqih, is considered one of the four main sources of Shii hadith. In this book, Shaykh Saduq narrates part of the Sermon of Fadak from Lady Zaynab (as), after which he says: "The sermon is lengthy; we have taken from it that which we require [for our discussion]."

7. Ilal al-Sharai by Shaykh Saduq:

Being a prolific writer, Şaduq wrote and compiled numerous works. In this book, he tries to examine the wisdom behind religious injunctions and narrates the same part of the sermon that he narrated in Man La Yahduruhu al-Faqih but with two different chains of transmission.

8. Al-Manaqib by Ahmad ibn Musa ibn Mardawayh (a. 410 A.H.):

This book is not currently extant. However, As'ad ibn Shaqarwih (d. 635 A.H.) related this sermon in his book al-Faiq (which is also non-extant) and Sayyid Ibn Tawus, in turn, narrated this in his work al-Taraif. Thus the book of Ibn Mardawayh that is currently available has actually been recompiled from al-Taraif and is not the original.

9. Nathr al-Durar by Mansur ibn al-Hussain al-Razi: The author was a fifth century (A.H.) Shii scholar from Rayy and had been, for some time, the vizier to Majd al-Dawlah. He compiled this work in seven volumes and though he had named it Nathr al-Durar, it was published and is well known as Nathr al-Durr. His other works include Nuzhat al-Adib and al-Tarikh. This work contains a large part of the Lady Fatimah's sermon, but without any chain of narrators.

10. Al-Shafi fi al-Imamah by Sayyid Murtada: Ali ibn al-Hussain al-Musawi, better known as Sayyid Murtada, was one of the luminaries of the Shia world. He wrote prolifically on numerous subjects such as jurisprudence, hadith and history. As the name suggests, al-Shafi fi al-Imamah is a book that contains traditions related to the subject of imamah. In this work, Sayyid Murtada relates part of the Sermon of Fadak from his teacher with three different chains of transmission.

11. Dalail al-Imamah by Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari: This author should not be confused with the famous early Sunnī historian Ibn Jarir al-Tabari or with the Shia scholar Muhammad ibn Jarir, author of al-Mustarshad fi al-Imamah. This author is known as al-Tabari al-Saghir and was a fifth century scholar. The most detailed narration of the Sermon of Fadak has been recorded in this work and hence it is commonly referred to by the late and contemporary scholars. Al-Tabari has listed eight different chains of transmission for this sermon.

12. Maqtal al-Husayn (as) by Muwaffaq ibn Ahmad al-Makki (d. 568 A.H.), better known as al-Khatib al-Khwarazmi. In this work, he narrates part of the sermon from Aishah.

13. Al-Ihtijaj ala Ahl al-Lijaj by Abu Mansur al-Tabarsi: Ahmad ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib al-Tabarsi (d. 588 A.H.) was a Shii scholar of the sixth century. His book al-ihitaj contains the debates of the Prophet (saw), the Imams (as), their companions and some Muslim scholars, against their opponents. In this work, al-Tabarsi narrates Abdullah ibn al-Hasan's exposition of the Sermon of Fadak.

14. Manal al-Talib fi Sharh Tawal al-Gharaib by Mubarak ibn Muhammad al-Jazari (d. 606 A.H.): This scholar, better known as Ibn Athir, narrates the sermon of Lady Fatimah (as) in detail, explaining all its difficult words and phrases, from Lady Zaynab al-Kubra (as).

15. Tadhkirat al-Khawaṣ min al-Ummah fi Dhikr Khasais al-Aimmah by Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzi: Abu Muzaffar Yusuf ibn Abdillah, commonly known as Ibn al-Jawzi, was a Hanafi scholar who died in 654 A.H. In this book, he discusses the merits and virtues of the Ahl al-Bayt (as). He narrates part of the Sermon of Fadak from al-Shabi without mentioning the chain of transmission.

16. Sharh Nahj al-Balagha by Ibn Abi al-Hadid (d. 656 A.H.): This is the most important commentary of the Nahj al-Balagha by a non-Shii scholar. It also contains significant historical information. In it, the author relates the Sermon of Fadak from al-Jawhari's al-Saqifah wa Fadak.

17. Sharh Nahj al-Balagha by Ali ibn Maytham al-Bahrani (d. 679): In this work, a small part of the sermon has been mentioned without its chain of transmission.

18. Kashf al-Ghummah fi Marifat al-Aimmah by al-Irbili: Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Isa ibn Abu al-Fath al-Irbili (d. 692 A.H.) was a Shia scholar. In this work, he relates the sermon from al-Jawhari's al-Saqifah wa Fadak.

The Sermon

Glory be to Allah for His great blessings, and gratitude to Him for that which He has inspired, and praise be to Him for what He has brought to pass. From the all-encompassing blessings that He grants to the ever-expansive grace that He bestows and all the bounties that He continuously confers. Its magnitude is greater than can be enumerated, its extent is beyond measure and its limit is beyond comprehension. He has invited the people to express their gratitude in order to seek its increase and continuity, called upon them to praise Him by augmenting it and followed up by bidding them to ask for more of its like [in the Hereafter].

I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, alone, having no partners - a statement the inner meaning of which has been defined as sincerity, its means have been instilled in the hearts and its meaning gleams in the minds. He cannot be perceived by sight, described by words or depicted by imaginations. He originated everything from nothing that existed before, and created everything without following any previous model. He fashioned everything with His power and made it all with His will, without any need for bringing it into being or any possible benefit that could come from forming it; only the affirmation of His wisdom, the proclamation of His obedience, the manifestation of His power, the servility of His subjects and the exaltation of His call. Then He placed reward in obedience and punishment in disobedience to Him, in order to turn His servants away from His chastisement and urge them towards His Paradise.

I bear witness that my father, Muhammad, is His servant and Prophet. He chose him even before sending him [with the Message], named him before picking him [for prophethood] and selected him before appointing him [as a Messenger] - at a time when the creation was hidden in the unknown, covered by the curtain of uncertainty and close to the edge of non-existence - out of the knowledge of Allah, the Most High, about the final outcome of every matter, the complete awareness of events that will transpire and cognizance of the end of all affairs. Allah sent him in order to complete His mission, establish His order and execute His mercy. He found the people divided in their beliefs, secluded around their sacred fires, worshipping their idols and denying Allah, despite having intrinsic knowledge about Him. So, through my father Muhammad (saw), Allah illuminated their darkness, removed the ambivalence from their hearts and illumined the obscurity of their sight.

He rose among the people with guidance, saved them from perversion, removed their [spiritual] blindness, led them to the right faith and called them towards the straight path. Then Allah took him back with kindness and election, affinity and preference.

Thus Muhammad (saw) is now in ease and comfort, [free] from the hardships of this world, surrounded by the blameless angels and the pleasure of the Forgiving Lord, in the company of the Almighty King. May Allah bless my father, His Prophet, the custodian of His revelation, His chosen servant, the one whom He selected from all His creatures and whom He is most pleased with. Peace, blessings and mercy of Allah be upon him.

Then she turned to the people who were present in the gathering and said:

You are the servants of Allah, the recipients of His commandments and prohibitions, the bearers of His religion and revelation and the trustees of Allah over your souls. You are the propagators of His message to all people. His true proxy is present among you, as the legacy that he (the Prophet) bequeathed and left behind with you, giving it authority over you - the Articulate Book of Allah, the True Quran, the Radiant Light, the Effulgent Illumination - with proofs that are manifest and mysteries that are evident. Its apparent message is clear and those who follow it are envied. Those who adhere to it are led to Allah's pleasure and those who heed to it are saved. Through it the enlightened proofs of Allah, His explicative verdicts, His forewarned prohibitions, His unambiguous statements, His sufficient evidence, His mandated virtues, His bestowed leniency and His ordained laws, are attained.

Allah made faith as a means to purify yourselves from polytheism, prayer a means of freeing yourselves from arrogance, the poor-rate a means of cleansing the soul and increasing sustenance, fasting a means of establishing sincerity, pilgrimage a means of upraising the religion, justice a means for maintaining harmony of the hearts, obedience to us (the Ahl al-Bayt) a means of maintaining order in the community, our leadership (*imamah*) as a security from disunity, holy struggle (*jihad*) as a glory for Islam, patience as an aid in making one deserving of recompense, enjoining good (*amr bi-l-maruf*) as a reformation for the masses, honoring parents a means of protection from [divine] wrath, keeping ties with family a means of increasing your numbers, sanctioned retaliation (*qisas*) a means of preventing bloodshed, fulfilling promises a means of earning forgiveness, honesty in weighing and

measurement a means of avoiding diminution, forbidding the drinking of wine a means of becoming free of filth, eschewing defamation as a screen against imprecation and shunning theft a means of maintaining virtue. He prohibited polytheism in order to make His Lordship exclusive, **“so observe your duty to Allah with the dutifulness due to Him, and do not die except as Muslims.”** (Q3:102). Obey Allah in that which He has commanded and forbidden, **“for indeed only those who possess knowledge fear Allah.”** (Q35:28)

Then she continued:

O People, know that I am Fatimah and my father is Muhammad (saw). I say again to you, and what I am saying is not false and what I am doing is not in transgression.

“There has certainly come to you a messenger from among yourselves; grievous to him is your distress; he is full of concern for you, and compassionate and merciful to the believers.” (Q9:128) So if you honor him and know him, you will realize that he is my father and not the father of anyone amongst your women. He is the bother of my cousin [and husband], and not of any of your men. How excellent it is to be related to him. He propagated the message, warned the people openly, and turned against the ways of the polytheists, breaking their backs and strangling their throats. He called [them] to the way of his Lord **“with wisdom and good advice.”** (Q16:125) He broke the idols and struck the heads, until they were defeated and forced to flee. Then night gave way to day and the pure truth shone forth. The leader of faith spoke and the camel-frothings of the devils were silenced. The servants of hypocrisy perished and the knots of disbelief and schism were undone.

You uttered the words of faith in the presence of the bright-faced and empty-of-stomach, while you were on **“the brink of a fiery pit.”** (Q3:103) A mere draught for the drinker and opportunity for the lustful [were you]. A flickering flame and a treading ground for others [were you]. You would drink from polluted water and eat dried animal skins and leaves. Abased and spurned, you feared being dispossessed by those around you.

Then Allah, the Almighty, rescued you through Muhammad (saw), after all these calamities and after suffering at the hands of barbarians, the wolfish Arabs, and the rebellious People of the Book. **“Whenever they ignited the flame of war, Allah extinguished it.”** (Q5:64)

Whenever the horn of Satan appeared or the polytheist's maw opened [in defiance], he would dispatch his brother [Ali (as)] into its midst and he would not return until he had trampled on its ear with the soles of his feet and put out its blaze with his sword.

He strove for the sake of Allah and struggled in the way of Allah. He was close to the Prophet of Allah, a leader among the friends of Allah, always prepared and diligent, sincere, earnest and hardworking - never fearing the reproach of any reproacher. Meanwhile, you were living lives of ease and comfort; relaxed, unperturbed and secure, awaiting the reversal of our fortunes, keenly waiting for news [of our failures], retreating during conflict and fleeing from battle.

So when Allah chose to take His Prophet to the abode of His Prophets and the dwelling of His sincere servants, the thorny tree of hypocrisy appeared amongst you and the robe of religion became ragged. The misguided, who were previously silent, began to speak, the unknown few arose, and the liars came forward, braying [like camels] as they strutted, wagging their tails in your courtyards. Satan raised his head from his hiding place and called out to you. He found you responsive to his call and attentive to his deception. Then he enticed you and found you easy to arouse; he exasperated you and found you easy to anger. So you branded camels that were not yours and proceeded to other than your own watering holes. This, while the era [of the Prophet] had only just ended, the gash was still wide and the wound still fresh. The Prophet had yet to be buried when you made haste, claiming that you were afraid of dissension; **“Lo, they have fallen into dissension! And indeed Hell surrounds the unbelievers.”** (Q9:49) Far be it! What is wrong with you? And where are you heading to while the Book of Allah is in your midst? Its affairs are distinct, its rulings manifest, its signs radiant, its prohibitions evident and its commands are clear. Yet you have cast it behind your backs. Do you wish to turn away from it out of aversion? Or do you wish to judge by another [book]? **“Evil would be the exchange for the wrongdoers!”** (Q18:50) **“And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, then it will not be accepted from him and he will be among the losers in the Hereafter.”** (Q3:85)

Then you only waited for as long as it took the feral [camel] to calm down and accept a rider taking control of its reins before reigniting its flames and kindling its embers.

You have responded to the cries of the misguiding Satan and have attempted to extinguish the lights of the splendid religion and suppress the teachings of the pure Prophet. You secretly drank the milk while pretending to sip the froth and stalked his family and children, hiding in the trees and trenches, yet we endure patiently with you through what feels like the stabbing of daggers and the piercing of [our] sides with spearheads.

And now you claim that we have no inheritance! **“Do they seek the judgment of [the age of] ignorance? And who is a better judge than Allah for the people who have certainty?”** (Q5:50) Do you know not? Indeed it is as obvious as the midday sun that I am his daughter!

O Muslims, will I be denied my inheritance?!

O Son of Abu Quhafah, is it in the Book of Allah that you may inherit from your father yet I cannot inherit from mine? **“You have certainly come up with a strange thing!”** (from Q19:27) Have you purposely abandoned the Book of Allah and cast it behind your backs? When it says: **“And Sulayman inherited from Dawud”** (Q27:16) and when relating the story of Yahya ibn Zakariyya, where he (Zakariyya) said: **“So grant me from Yourself an heir who will inherit from me and inherit from the family of Yaqub”** (Q19:5-6) and it further states: **“...but blood relatives are more entitled [to inherit] from one another in the Book of Allah”** (Q8:75) and: **“Allah enjoins you concerning your children: for the male shall be the like of the share of two females”** (Q4:11) and: **“...if he leaves behind any property, he should make a bequest for his parents and relatives in kindness, an obligation for the Godway”** (Q2:180) yet you claim that I have no entitlement and inherit nothing from my father?!

Has Allah revealed a special verse [of the Quran] for you from which He excluded my father? Or do you say that people of two separate faiths cannot inherit from one another? Are my father and I not upon the same faith? Or is it that you have greater knowledge of the particular and general injunctions of the Quran than my father and cousin? So take hold of its reins, muzzled and saddled, for it will surely meet you on the day you are assembled; and Allah is the best judge and Muhammad the best leader. The [final] rendezvous is on the Day of Resurrection, and when it comes, the falsifiers will be the losers and your remorse will be of no benefit. **“For every tiding there is an appointed term”** (Q6:67) **“Soon you will know whom a disgraceful punishment will overtake and on whom a lasting punishment will descend.”** (Q11:39)

Then addressing the Ansar, she said:

O people of understanding, supporters of faith and defenders of Islam, what is [the cause of] this negligence in defending my rights and laxity before the injustice being done to me? Did my father, the Prophet of Allah (saw), not say: **“A man is honored through his offspring”**? How quickly have you changed, and how hastily have you have betrayed us, while you possess the ability to assist me and the strength to support me in what I seek and pursue.

Do you say: “Muhammad (saw) has died”? This is indeed a grave matter whose damage is extensive, its breach is vast and its weavings have been rent apart. The world has become dark by his absence; the sun and moon have been eclipsed and the stars scattered because of his loss, hopes have been dashed, mountains have crumbled, sanctities have been violated and all that is sacred has been disregarded upon his death. This is, by Allah, a great tribulation and a dire calamity, no tribulation can be compared to it and no adversity is as grievous. The Book of Allah – glory be to Him – announced it in your courtyards, in your evenings and mornings, calling and crying out, recited and chanted, that the Prophets of Allah and His Messengers who came before were not able to overcome the definitive verdict and the inescapable decree [of death]. **“And Muhammad is but a messenger, other messengers have passed away before him. If he dies or is slain, will you turn back on your heels? Anyone who turns back on his heels will not harm Allah in the least, and soon Allah will reward the grateful.”** (Q3:144)

Far be it, O Children of Qaylah! Will I be deprived of my patrimony while you watch and listen to me? And [while you] are seated and gathered here? You are involved in the claim and are aware of it, and you are numerous and well equipped; you possess means and strength, and own weapons and shields. The case has reached you yet you do not respond? You hear the cry yet you do not assist me? Yet you are known for your bravery and have a reputation for being good and righteous; you are an elite group and the best of those who were selected. You fought the [pagan] Arabs and bore pains and hardships. You clashed with the nations and battled the champions. We have not ceased, or is it you who have ceased? You always complied; we ordered and you obeyed. Until, through us, Islam was established and the milk of prosperity began to flow, the breach of polytheism was subdued, the ebullition of falsehood subsided, the fires of disbelief were stifled, the call to rebellion was silenced and the religious order was founded.

So why have you become confused after your clear stance? Why have you become secretive after your proclamation? Why have you retreated after being at the forefront? And why have you opted for polytheism after believing [in Allah]? **“Will you not make war on a people who broke their pledges and resolved to expel the Messenger, while they attacked you first? Do you fear them? But Allah is worthier of being feared by you, should you be faithful.”** (Q9:13) Lo, I see you now inclined to a life of ease, having distanced yourselves from the one who is more worthy of giving and withholding. You have with-drawn into comfort and have escaped from hardship to abundance. You have thus spit out what you had retained and vomited out what you had swallowed. **“If you are ungrateful, you and those on earth all together, most surely Allah is Self-sufficient, Praised.”** (Q14:8)

I have said what I had to say, being fully aware of your intention to forsake me and of the betrayal that has sprung in your hearts. But this was the unbosoming of the soul, the outburst of anger, the inability to further endure, the expression of the heart and the advancing of proof. So take its reins and saddle it, with its sore back and suppurating hooves, ever disgraceful, branded with the wrath of Allah and eternal dishonor, leading to **“the fire, set ablaze by Allah, that roars over the hearts”** (Q104:6-7), for what you are doing is witnessed by Allah, **“and they who act unjustly shall know to what final place of turning they shall turn back.”** (Q26:227) I am the daughter of **“a warner unto you, before a severe chastisement”** (Q34:46) So act, we too shall act, **“and wait, we too shall wait.”** (Q11:122)

After having heard this, Abu Bakr said:

O daughter of the Messenger of Allah! Your father was indeed affectionate, generous, gracious and merciful to the believers, and the disbelievers shall face painful chastisement and severe retribution. If we look at his relationships, we find that he was your father to the exclusion of other women, and the brother of your husband to the exclusion of all [his] other close companions. He preferred him over every close friend and he, on his part, assisted him in every important matter. None love you save the felicitous and none despise you save the wretched. You are the pure progeny of the Messenger of Allah, the best of the chosen ones, our guides towards virtue and our path to Paradise. And you, O best of all women and daughter of the best of Prophets, are true in your words and foremost in the prodigiousness of your intellect. You will not be denied your right nor will your truth be contested.

By Allah, I have never opposed the opinion of the Messenger of Allah, and have never done anything but by his permission. The herald does not lie to his people; I take Allah as my witness, and He suffices as a witness, that I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say: “We, the company of Prophets, neither bequeath gold nor silver, nor houses nor land; we only bequeath the Book, wisdom, knowledge and prophethood, and whatever we possess of [revenue generating] property, it is for the ruler who comes after us to dispense with according to his own judgment.” And we have already spent what you are asking for, to procure horses and weapons that the Muslims may use in battle, to fight against the unbelievers and quash the insurgency of rebels. This was done by the general consensus of all the Muslims; I did not make this decision alone and I never enforced my opinion on anyone.

This is my state and my wealth, it is at your disposal and I place it before you. Nothing will be withheld from you and nothing will be kept from you. You are the noblewoman of your father’s nation and a pure [maternal] tree for your children. Your merits cannot be disputed and your honorable lineage and roots cannot be disparaged. Your command with respect to what I possess shall be enforced. Do you think I should act against the will of your father (saw) in this matter?

She (as) replied:

Praise be to Allah! My father, the Messenger of Allah (saw), never turned away from the Book of Allah, nor did he oppose its injunctions. Rather, he followed its directives and abided by its lofty teachings. Do you add on to your treachery by ascribing falsehood to him? And this [plot] after his death is similar to the pernicious plots that were staged against him during his lifetime. Here is the Book of Allah, a just adjudicator and a decisive articulator, [clearly] saying: **“[An heir] who may inherit from me and inherit from the House of Yaqub”** (Q19:6) and **“Sulayman inherited from Dawud...”** (Q27:16) And the Almighty clarified how the shares are to be allotted, and legislated the laws of [filial] obligation and inheritance, prescribing the proper share of males and females, thereby removing the excuse of the falsifiers and eliminating suspicions and doubts in those left behind. No, **“but your souls have made the matter seem decorous for you; yet patience is beautiful, and Allah is the one whose help is sought against what you allege.”** (Q12:18)

Abu Bakr replied:

Allah spoke the truth and so did his Prophet. And his daughter has also spoken the truth. You are indeed a source of wisdom, a fountainhead of guidance and mercy, a pillar of faith and a wellspring of proof. I do not repudiate your apposite speech, nor do I reject what you say. These Muslims in front of us are the ones who compelled me to accept what I have accepted and it is by their unanimity that I took what I did; neither by coercion, nor obstinacy, nor self-importance, and they are all witnesses to this.

Fatimah (as) then turned to the people and said:

O people who hasten towards false speech! O those who are complacent with the ugly action that will bring ruin! **“Do they not reflect on the Quran or are there locks on the hearts?” (Q47:24)** No, rather your hearts have become rusted by the evil that you have done. Thus your hearing and sight have been taken away and you have gravely misinterpreted it (the Quran); how wrongly you have referred to it, and how evil is your construal from it. By Allah, you will surely find its burden heavy and its consequence dire, when the veil is lifted and the great adversity that follows becomes evident to you, and there will appear to you from your Lord what you never reckoned, **“it is then that those who stood by falsehood will be the losers.” (Q40:78)**

Finally, she turned to face the grave of the Holy Prophet (saw) and recited the following couplets:

After you [passed away], reports and chaos followed,
Had you been present, tribulations would not abound

We miss you just as parched land misses its rain,
And your nation is confused, see how they have turned
around

Every family has relatives but the position
before God, is for those with the greatest proximity [to you]

People manifested against us what was hidden in their hearts,
As soon as you departed and the barrier of dust separated us
from you

They frowned at us and insulted us
when you were gone, and all the land was usurped

You were a full moon and an illuminating light
from the Almighty, upon you was the book revealed

Jibra'il would comfort us with the verses he brought,
But now you are not here and all goodness has disappeared

O how I wish death would have come to us before you,
When you passed and were, by the dune, from us covered

Conclusion

The sermon delivered by the Prophet's daughter, Lady Fatimah (as), soon after his death, clearly shows that she was displeased with the prevailing state of affairs. In her sermon, she alludes to usurpation of the caliphate in more than one instance and describes it as a “camel with a sore back.” Though she speaks of her ‘inheritance’, historical accounts as well as traditions show that the land of Fadak was actually gifted to her by the Prophet (saw) during his lifetime.

One of the interesting sections of this sermon is the discussion on the philosophy of ritual acts of worship. Lady Fatimah beautifully explains why we have been commanded to pray, fast, go for pilgrimage etc. There is a lot to be said about the profundity of her statements and scholars have written volumes expounding on her words. Her mentioning the precepts of Islam in a sermon such as this shows that even when she was distressed, she took the opportunity to impart some of the knowledge she had gained from her father.

The boldness with which Fatimah al-Zahra (as) speaks to the caliph shows that she was brave and fearless. On the other hand, the manner in which Abu Bakr responded to her indicates that she was a lady who was greatly admired and respected by the Muslim community. Furthermore, her copious use of Quranic verses, upon which she bases her arguments, speaks to her mastery over the contents of the divine book.

Many questions crop up when one examines of this historic sermon, such as: (a) Why was Fadak taken away in the first place? (b) Why did the Muslims not come to her aid when she called for their support? (c) Why did she allude to the caliphate being usurped? (d) If Abu Bakr held her in such high regard and considered her a ‘noblewoman of the Prophet's ummah’, why did he not acquiesce to her demands and return Fadak to her? (e) Why does she demand Fadak as her inheritance if it was, as history attests, a gift? (f) What role did Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) play in attempting to get Fadak returned to his wife?

These questions are beyond the scope of this paper, but the answers to these questions may be found in available works of hadith and Islamic history.

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Logo with Arabic text:
الله





She The Divine Secret

Gabriel the Honest Archangel descended, "Peace be upon you, O Allah's Messenger!" he greeted, "The Most High and All-high (Lord) conveys to you His greeting, expresses His special greeting and honoring to you, and says, 'By My Almightyness and My Majesty I take this oath: I have not created any well-established sky, extended land, glowing moon, shining sun, revolving planet, flowing ocean, or moving on ark except for your sake and for your love.'

Sughra Ali

Forgive Me

Forgive me if I shed tears

* * *

Forgive me if when these days return to us... you see that tear-drops on my eyelid lie
But you can't understand what my eyes see... each time they see her, I feel my heart die
I see her crushed between the door and wall... each time my eyelids close and crush my eye
And as blood flows from the chest of Zahra... my tears flow to soothe the pain of my eye

* * *

Forgive me if when day reaches the sky... and I see her days on the horizon
I hold onto my chest in agony... as if the rib in my chest is broken
As if I'm crushed between a door and wall... gasping for air as the door would tighten
With the pain of a nail in my chest... holding my scream because I'm a woman

* * *

Forgive me if I act like an orphan... crying out for the help of her father
Holding my scarf like I'm holding my soul... so it doesn't get burned by the fire
I sit with my hands defending my face... wondering if this man has a daughter
As the devil's hand slaps the purest face... and chains are put on the hands of Haider

* * *

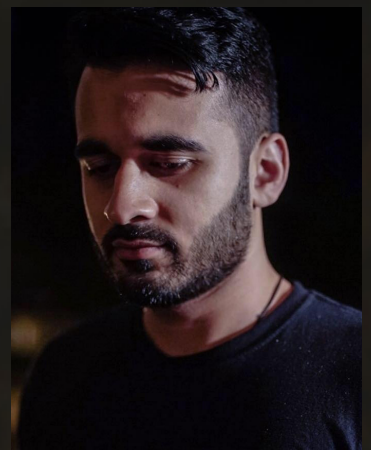
Forgive me if when I see black cloth... my hand holds my heart, feeling a darkness
As if there is a gap deep in my heart... as if I have lost something so precious
As if I'm a mother who lost her son... and you see me holding him in sadness
Looking at someone too young to be born... too young to see his mother in distress

* * *

If these days I dress in black, forgive me... if I cry when I serve, recite or cook
If I'm serving and I collapse in tears... as if my soul the angel of death took
If the picture of Fatima Zahra... you see in my eyes whenever you look
But the fire of her house burnt my face... and by the push of the door I was shook

Written by:

NOURI SARDAR



Q&A

This is where our contributors and editors answer your questions, so please keep sending them to alwarith@imamhussain-lib.com

Q If infallibility is a necessary quality of Prophets and Imams because they are the transmitters and protectors of divine revelation and guidance, then what is the wisdom behind Lady Fatimah (as) being infallible, because she is neither a Prophet nor an Imam?

A Infallibility is a quality required for any person who is charged with delivering God's message to humanity; however, the responsibility of delivering the message is not the cause of infallibility. Rather, it is a spiritual station indicative of a person's proximity to God and hence, it is not specific and unique to Prophets and Imams alone. It was Lady Fatimah's (as) lofty position of purity and closeness to God, that qualified her to be the mother whose progeny includes the Imams. She reflected the highest level of obedience to God's law and guidance in all her actions and therefore, she serves as an infallible guide and role model for all believers.

Q How can we claim that Lady Fatimah (as) lived an ascetic way of life if she owned a servant?


A According to Islam, leading an ascetic life does not mean that a person owns nothing. Rather, it means the person is not attached to their material possessions and so their possessions do not distract them from the remembrance, obedience and service of God.

Continued next page

Moreover, the Holy Prophet's (saw) objective in gifting Lady Fatimah (as) with a servant was to facilitate more time for divine worship. It is also important to note that various members of the Ahl al-Bayt kept servants in their home in order to nurture them to follow the teachings of Islam and thereafter, spread its message and beauty to others through their character and example. Lady Fidah was such a servant.

Therefore, there is no contradiction between the asceticism of Lady Fatimah (as) and having a servant in her house. In fact, Lady Fidah benefitted more from her position of servitude than Lady Fatimah (as) as her owner.

Is Surat al-Kawthar about Lady Fatimah (as) or about a river in heaven?

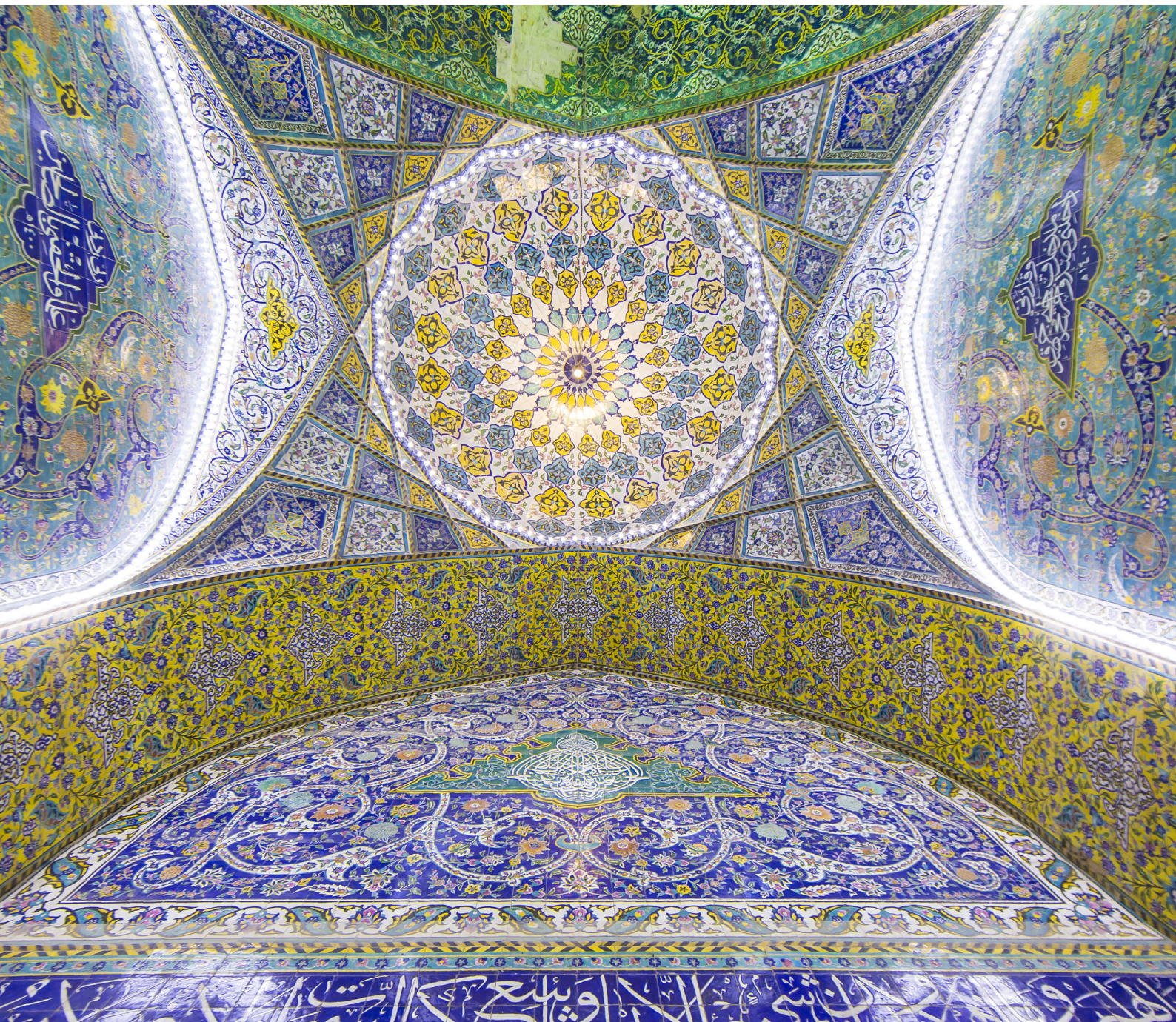
 The linguistic meaning of kawthar is an abundance of goodness and commentators have differed in their understanding of what this goodness refers to. Interpretations of what the term, kawthar, may refer to, are numerous and diverse. They include: an abundance of goodness in general, a river in heaven or the fountain of the Holy Prophet (saw) in heaven, the offspring of the Holy Prophet (saw), the intercession of the Holy Prophet (saw), his companions or his followers until the Day of Judgement, the scholars of the Holy Prophet's (saw) ummah, the Holy Qur'an, Prophethood, Islam itself, and the unity of God.

However, since the surah itself mentions the offspring of the enemies of the Holy Prophet (saw), it makes contextual sense that the term kawthar refers to the line of Imamate within the lineage of the Holy Prophet (saw). Moreover, this surah was revealed to comfort the Holy Prophet (saw) after his sons Qasim and Abdullah died and he faced the taunts of his enemies that he would leave no progeny behind after he passed away. Hence, it is clear that the term kawthar within the surah refers to Lady Fatimah (as) because she provided the Holy Prophet (saw) with an abundant and holy progeny inclusive of the twelve Imams. Based on various traditions, kawthar also refers to a river in heaven.

Q Why was Lady Fatimah (as) named Fatimah?

A Fatimah comes from the root f – t – m which means to wean. Various reasons as to why Lady Fatimah (as) was named Fatimah are mentioned in ahadith:

- a. Lady Fatimah (as) has been weaned away from evil. Hence, she is pure and distanced from all evil.
- b. God has weaned those who love her from the fire of Hell.
- c. She and her followers are weaned from the fire of Hell.
- d. Those who love her or love those who love her, or love those who love those who love her, are weaned from the Fire.
- e. Her enemies are weaned from her love.





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*Please send contributions for all future issues, comments and questions to:
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